

## Catalogue of American Amphibians and Reptiles.

ERNST, CARL H. 1981. *Rhinoclemmys rubida*.

***Rhinoclemmys rubida* (Cope)  
Mexican spotted terrapin**

*Chelopus rubidus* Cope, 1869:148. Type-locality, "Tuchitan [Juchitan] Tehuantepec, Mexico." Syntypes, U.S. Nat. Mus. 45612 (adult female), USNM 45613 (adult female), and USNM 45614 (juvenile), collected by Francis Sumichrast, no date (examined by author).

*Geoclemmys rubida*: Gray, 1870a:28.

*Rhinoclemmys mexicana* Gray, 1870b:659. Type-locality, "Mexico; [Oaxaca] San Juan del Rio." Holotype, adult female, British Mus. (Natur. Hist.) 1947.3.4.34, collected by M. Rebouch, no date (examined by author).

*Chelopus mexicana*: Bocourt, 1876:387.

*Chelopus (Rhinoclemmys) mexicanus*: Sumichrast, 1882:271.

*Emys rubida*: Guenther, 1885:8.

*Nicoria rubida*: Boulenger, 1889:127.

*Clemmys rubida*: Strauch, 1890:68.

*Nicoria rutila*: Gadow, 1905:210. Lapsus calami.

*Geomyda rubida*: Siebenrock, 1909:500.

*Geomyda rubida*: Maldonado-Koerdell, 1953:130.

*Rhinoclemmys rubida*: McDowell, 1964:267.

*Rhinoclemmys rubida*: Smith and Taylor, 1966:12. First use of combination.

*Calopsis rubida*: Smith, Smith, and Sawin, 1976:216

• CONTENT. Two subspecies are recognized: *Rhinoclemmys rubida rubida*, and *R. r. perixantha*.

• DEFINITION. Adults grow to 230 mm in carapace length with no apparent difference between the sexes. The flattened to slightly domed carapace is rugose owing to growth rings, mid-dorsally keeled, posteriorly serrated, and usually widest and highest just behind the middle. The carapace is yellowish brown with dark seams and dark mottling on each scute to unicolor chocolate. A yellow spot may be present in the center of each vertebral and pleural. The unhinged plastron is well developed, slightly up-turned anteriorly, and notched posteriorly. The plastron is yellow with a brown central blotch, and a brown bridge. The head is moderate-sized, has a projecting snout and a hooked upper jaw. A highly variable, broad horseshoe-shaped light mark lies on the crown and usually several light bars across the snout. A light stripe passes between the orbit and the tympanum and another from the corner of the mouth to the tympanum. The jaws and chin are yellow with small dark vermiculations or stipples. The feet are not or only slightly webbed. The forelegs are covered with large yellow or reddish black spotted scales. Other skin is olive-gray to yellow. Males have concave plastrons and longer tails with the vent beyond the carapacial margin; females have flat plastrons, shorter tails, and the vent beneath the carapace.

• DESCRIPTIONS. General descriptions are given by Gray (1870b, 1870c, 1871), Boulenger (1889), Siebenrock (1906, 1909), Pritchard (1967), and Ernst (1978). Gray (1871) describes a young specimen. Other specific descriptions are: mental glands (Winokur and Legler, 1975), choanal structure (Parsons, 1960, 1968).

• ILLUSTRATIONS. Color photographs or plates of adults are in Gray (1871) and Pritchard (1967); other illustrations of adults are found in Werler and Smith (1952) and Wermuth and Mertens (1961). Black and white drawings of the head pattern are presented in Gray (1870b, 1870c), Guenther (1885), and Mosimann and Rabb (1953). Cross-sectional drawings of the shell are found in Mosimann (1955).

• DISTRIBUTION. *Rhinoclemmys rubida* is restricted to the lowlands of the west coast of Mexico and has a disjunct range. Two subspecies occur within the range. *Rhinoclemmys r. rubida* ranges from central Oaxaca to southern Chiapas, and *R. r. perixantha* occurs in southern Jalisco, Colima, and Michoacan. *Rhinoclemmys rubida* has not yet been collected in Guerrero, but probably occurs in the coastal lowlands.

• FOSSIL RECORD. None.

• PERTINENT LITERATURE. Important references are listed by topic. Taxonomy: McDowell (1964), Ernst (1978). Feeding habits: Hartweg and Oliver (1940), Beltz (1958). Shell shape: Mosimann (1955). Choanal structure: Parsons (1960, 1968). Pelvic girdle and hind limbs: Zug (1971). Mental glands: Winokur and Legler (1975). Parasites: Ernst and Ernst (1977). Reproduction: Ewert (1979). Longevity: Bowler (1977).

• ETYMOLOGY. The name *rubida* is derived from the Latin *rubidus* meaning reddish and probably refers to the light markings on the skin. The subspecific name *perixantha* is derived from the Greek *peri* meaning around and Greek *xanthos* meaning yellow and refers to the yellowish marginals.

**1. *Rhinoclemmys rubida rubida* (Cope)**

*Chelopus rubidus* Cope, 1869:148. See species synonymy.

*Rhinoclemmys mexicana* Gray, 1870b:659. See species synonymy.

*Chelopus mexicana*: Bocourt, 1876:387.

*Cehlopus (Rhinoclemmys) mexicanus*: Sumichrast, 1882:271.

*Geoemyda rubida rubida*: Mosimann and Rabb, 1953:1.

*Rhinoclemmys rubida rubida*: Smith and Taylor, 1966:12. First use of combination.

*Calopsis rubida rubida*: Smith and Smith, 1975:5.

• DEFINITION. The carapace has a light brown ground color with dark mottlings, the gular scutes are approximately twice as long as the humerals. The marginal scutes show faint lateral flaring. There is an elongated light temporal spot.

**2. *Rhinoclemmys rubida perixantha* (Mosimann and Rabb)**

*Geoemyda rubida perixantha* Mosimann and Rabb, 1953:1. Type-locality, "8 kilometers south of Tecoman, Colima, Mexico." Holotype, adult male, Univ. Michigan Mus. Zool. 80336, collected by James A. Oliver on 13 July, 1935 (examined by author).

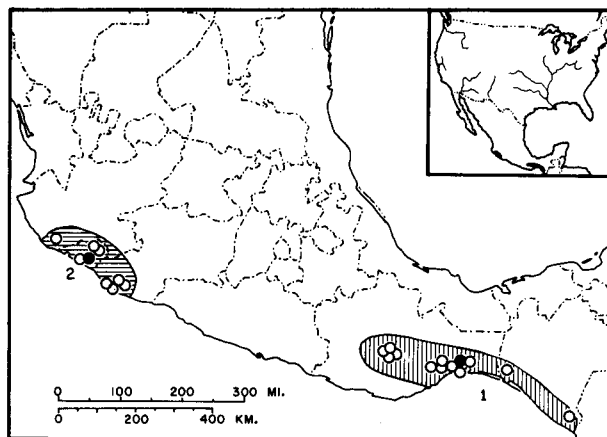
*Rhinoclemmys rubida perixantha*: Smith and Taylor, 1966:12. First use of combination.

*Calopsis rubida perixantha*: Smith and Smith, 1975:5.

• DEFINITION. The carapace has light brown marginal scutes without dark mottlings and pleural scutes darker brown than the vertebrals and marginals. The gular scutes are only slightly longer than the humerals. The marginal scutes are strongly flared laterally. There is an oval temporal spot.

**COMMENT**

In the original description of the species, Cope (1869:149) listed four specimens, "Nos. 264-5-6-7," as the type series. Only three are now known to exist (U.S. Nat. Mus. 45612-14) and a careful search at that museum has failed to produce the fourth.



MAP. The solid circles mark the type-localities; open circles indicate other selected localities.

However, there is a series of six *R. rubida* at the Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia (285, 337–341) collected by Sumichrast at the type-locality which are marked "syntypes," and possibly the missing specimen in reality belonged to this series.

Little is known of the ecology and behavior of this turtle and field studies are needed.

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